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Bill to Jim, December 1963

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BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
WALTHAM 54, MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS

1963

Almost the night before
Christmas

Professor James Silver
Dept. of History
University of Mississippi
Oxford, Mississippi

Dear Jim:

Thanks for your note and forgive the long delayed reply. I sent the small change along and trust you received it. We finished the lectures a couple of weeks ago, and I have been trying to catch up on the lost Tuesdays ever since. Not really lost, though. The coverage has been widespread..... the impact here terrific, and of course we hoping for good things from the T. V. show. Of course I'll let you know when it will be shown in Memphis. We expect to work on the program after the holidays, and have it ready by March.

I gather you're still holding them at bay in Oxford, and there just isn't anything they can do about it. When you come to think of your unique position..... not simply unique in Mississippi, but in the entire South, it certainly has Faulknerian overtones to it. If you can just hold out and keep needling them, there are bound to be some younger men coming along in other places who will be inspired by your example.

Our next serious problem here is to get going on a long range education-program for Negro boys and girls, primarily from the South. All of the universities in this area are going to get together and pool their resources and conduct a formidable recruiting drive in Southern Negro colleges for bright second year students who can be brought up here on scholarship and primed for graduate or professional school standards. We are also planning to include some of our own ghettoized Negro kids in such a program. Another idea we are thinking about is taking 50 or 100 Negro kids over the summer from local high schools, and giving them a fare a few notches above the Boston public school level to raise their sights a bit, and get them interested in moving on to college. Anyway, there's plenty to do here as well as Mississippi so we'd better get on with it.

I hope we can keep in touch with one another. One of the difficulties of this situation is that communication breaks down so frequently, and when there are no legitimate barriers there just isn't a good justification for it.

All our best for a good Christmas/AND A reasonably happy New Year.

B. Q.